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**NEWS RELEASE**

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## **San Francisco Judge Dennis Montali to Lead Ninth Circuit Bankruptcy Appellate Panel**

SAN FRANCISCO – United States Bankruptcy Judge Dennis Montali of San Francisco has assumed the gavel as chief judge of the Ninth Circuit Bankruptcy Appellate Panel (BAP), which resolves appeals arising out of bankruptcy court decisions.

Judge Montali, 68, was elevated to chief judge on a vote of his fellow judges on the BAP. His term as chief judge began August 17, 2008, and will run through April 30, 2010, when he is scheduled to step down from the BAP after 10 years of service, the maximum allowed under circuit rules.

“It is an honor to serve on what amounts to the ultimate peer review panel,” said Judge Montali, who came onto the BAP in 2000 and has been a bankruptcy judge since 1993.

“We are very proud of the fact that (the BAP) decides cases very quickly and we plan to keep up that pace,” he added, noting that the court currently has no pending cases under submission.

Judge Montali succeeds Bankruptcy Judge Christopher M. Klein of Sacramento as chief judge of the BAP. Judge Klein left the BAP last month after 10 years of service.

The BAP, which is based in the Richard H. Chambers U.S. Courthouse in Pasadena, received 379 appeals in 2007, about 58 percent of all appeals of bankruptcy decisions throughout the Ninth Circuit last year (district courts heard the remainder of the appeals).

The BAP has six permanent judges who serve seven-year terms with the possibility of a three-year extension. A seventh BAP judgeship has been left vacant in recent years, in part so that bankruptcy judges from around the circuit might be able to experience the appellate process as judges *pro tem*. BAP appointments are made by the Judicial Council of the Ninth Circuit, governing body for federal courts in nine western states and two Pacific Island jurisdictions.

Judge Montali is currently in his second 14-year term as a judge of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of California. He was first appointed in 1993 and reappointed in 2007. Prior to coming onto the bench, he headed the Creditors Rights and Bankruptcy Group at the law firm of Pillsbury, Madison & Sutro. He is a current fellow of the American College of Bankruptcy and a former member of the National Bankruptcy Conference.

A native of San Francisco, Judge Montali received his B.A. in 1961 from the University of Notre Dame, and his J.D. in 1968 from the University of California at Berkeley Boalt Hall School of Law. He served on active duty with the Naval Reserve from 1961 to 1965.

The BAP was established in 1979 by the Judicial Council of the Ninth Circuit as an alternative forum for hearing bankruptcy appeals. Since then, it has disposed of more than 15,000 cases, including more than 5,250 decided on the merits.

The Ninth Circuit was the first federal circuit to establish a bankruptcy appellate panel. Other circuits with bankruptcy appellate panels are the First, Sixth, Eighth and Tenth circuits. For more information, visit: <http://www.ce9.uscourts.gov/bap> .

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